

BLOOMFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

LAND USE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

There was a regular meeting of the above referenced subcommittee held on Monday, July 20, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in Conference Room #5, Bloomfield Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, CT.

Committee members present were: Deputy Mayor Gamble, Councilors Washington, Neuwirth, DeLorenzo and Mayor Schulman

Also present were: India Rodgers, Clerk of Council, Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager and Jose Giner, Director of Planning & Economic Development

Absent was: Councilor Rivers

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Review and Discussion: Town Property, 1133 Blue Hills Avenue

Mr. Jose Giner, Director of Planning & Economic Development presented a map of the location for discussion, 1133 Blue Hills Avenue. There was a conceptual proposal presented by Mr. Joseph Suggs and Calamar Enterprises to sale a portion of 1133 Blue Hills Avenue for restricted elderly housing. The detailed proposal included two single buildings totaling 120 units for individuals 62 years of age or older. The tentative rental amount is approximately \$1000 - \$1400 per month for one bedroom units.

There is a total of 22.8 acres for sale behind the current location of the Bloomfield Board of Education (1133 Blue Hills Avenue). If this development were to be built, it would leave the Board of Education with approximately 7 acres. It was noted that 15 acres are wetlands, most not usable for development.

Mr. Philip K. Schenck, Jr., Town Manager reviewed the town policy memorandum regarding the sale of excess town land. Mr. Schenck, Jr. will speak with the Board of Education to inquire about their usage for the property, if any. In addition, the land may be declared as excess town land to keep as open space. Other entities in town may also have an opinion about what happens with the land. The sale of this land could also provide a tax base for the town.

Councilor Neuwirth inquired about the need for additional elderly housing in town. Mayor Schulman gave a brief history regarding other land parcels in the area that were considered in the past for housing as well.

Mr. Schenck, Jr. gave a brief update regarding the TFC Housing Corporation project, in which they have an option to purchase a land parcel, 6 acres on Douglas Street for \$195,000. The grant application for this project was approved by the State of Connecticut Department of Housing. There are concerns regarding this property due to the amount of wetlands discovered within the land tract.

Councilor DeLorenzo inquired about land value for the parcel in question. He also inquired about additional information in writing of a potential developer for this housing project to investigate the need in town and interest in housing for seniors.

Deputy Mayor Gamble explained the need for additional senior housing. She also discussed 30% of the town has already been designated as open space, which does not build the tax base for the town. She is definitely in favor of exploring the sale of this land parcel as an option.

Mayor Schulman inquired about if these housing units are subsidized, any amenities provided, possibility to maintain as open space, and what would be the potential highest and best use of the land if sold.

Mr. Schenck, Jr. had previous discussions with the Board of Education regarding the building and a possible move to another location within town. The Board stated that they didn't want to move due to storage issues for school facilities.

Councilor Washington expressed concerns about issues with gentrification and the possibility to purchase the entire property, instead of a portion.

It was moved by Councilor Neuwirth, seconded by Councilor DeLorenzo and voted unanimously to research all possibilities in the development of 1133 Blue Hills Avenue.

Old Business

- Councilor Neuwirth inquired about a potential developer for the Valco building now that it has been demolished. He also stated that a town resident who owns property near the Valco building, inquired about the boarded house as an eyesore in the neighborhood.
- It was also noted that the S.O.S. Electric may be placed on the blighted property list due to the conditions of the building.
- The subcommittee also discussed the status of the house located at 2 Maple Street. The owner of this property signed a contract with Haz Pro to begin the abatement process and demolish the home.
- Councilor Neuwirth had recent discussions with administration from the Bloomfield Board of Education and the University of Hartford regarding a "Bloomfield Scholars" program supported by Dr. Ellen Stolz. Councilor Neuwirth suggested to establish an

exploratory committee to review options for collaborating with the university on other programs and initiatives within town.

- There was also some brief discussion regarding the possibility of opening Goodman Street or building a road from Cottage Grove Road for more accessibility between the University of Hartford and the town. Mr. Schenck, Jr. stated that it would be approximately \$3,000,000 to build this road. Mr. Giner also stated that the University of Hartford is currently in negotiations with the Hartford College for Women to explore their campus space for dormitories. All other projects have been halted at this time.
- Bloomfield Center Business Alliance is a tentative name recommended by the EDC Commission for businesses in the center of town.

Councilor Neuwirth commented about the role of the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and the Land Use & Economic Development subcommittee. The EDC is a technical advisory committee with members who possess expertise in the area of economic development. The Land Use & Economic Development subcommittee is a combination of town administration personnel and town council members who recommend any relative issues to the full town council body regarding land use and economic development issues.

Councilor Washington commented regarding the connection between the University of Hartford and the necessary funding needed to possibly establish a road and continue collaborations with the town.

- Bloomfield Apartments – Mr. Paul Butler hired the Post Road Residential team to build the proposed 214 apartment units on Jerome Avenue. He also outlined the following timeline for approvals:
 - On August 10, 2015, Mr. Butler will request the Town Council to approve an easement to discharge storm water on the northwest corner of Bloomfield Avenue.
 - On September 21, 2015 the project will be presented to Inland/Wetlands Commission.to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission.
 - On September 24, 2015 the project will be presented to Town Plan and Zoning Commission.

Mr. Butler is also requesting to modify the limit of 4 stories in the corner of the building to include 12,000 sq. ft. of amenities to accommodate a 4,000 sq. ft. for gym, private dining room, and a rooftop terrace.

In addition, Mr. Butler also hired Ms. Claudine Howard of 5 Terry Plains Road to ensure compliance with minority workforce requirements. Her business address is 3 Barnard Lane, Bloomfield.

- The Niagara Bottling Company has decided to revisit Bloomfield for possible construction of a distribution facility. A pre-development meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday, July 28, 2015 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Niagara states that this facility could possibly bring 75 new jobs to the town.

Adjournment

It was moved by Councilor DeLorenzo, seconded by Councilor Neuwirth and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.